

Left to right, top, Pork Tourtière, Tourtière à l'Alsace, Beef Tourtière; middle, Duck Tourtière, Beef

The upper crust in tourtière

Readers offer their tried-and-true family recipes

By JULIAN ARMSTRONG
Gazette Food Editor

Quebec's tourtière tradition is alive, well and as satisfying a holiday habit if it dates back four generations or a mere year.

This warming winter dish conjures up contented memories in both old and young Gazette readers, we discovered from the 40 recipes and recollections that were sent in from all parts of the Montreal area and such centres as Quebec City, Cap de la Madeleine, Deux Montagnes, Richmond, Stanstead and Sherbrooke.

"I can't eat bought tourtière," wrote Cheryl Berger, 31, of Dollard des Ormeaux. "I wait for every winter for one reason alone — to eat home-baked tourtière," she added, enclosing her family's three-generation recipe she took with her when she left home.

Ingredients in this pie vary widely, we found. Most contained ground pork, often combined with veal or beef, and with potatoes or bread crumbs to mop up the juices. A few were made with poultry and game.

"I like to add a piece of moose meat and a rabbit or two," wrote Vida Agnes of Douglstown, enclosing a tourtière of pork flavored with leeks along with the usual onions. And Mrs. J. Levis of Richmond included rabbit and venison in her list of meats to add to the basic pork.

Robert Sternberg of Côte St. Lac sent a kosher version using veal and fresh tomatoes. Several contributors had cut calories by cooking the cooked meat mixture, then removing the solidified fat.

Others revealed they provide contrast to the fat in either filling or pastry. Marie-Angèle Drouin of Montreal adds lemon juice to her pastry.

Sources for this dish varied too, from grandmother's receipt books to neighbors to newspaper recipes dating back as far as 40 years ago.

Marcel and Denise Gaurin of Lacoste enjoy a pie with a pastry that came originally from a chef on Canadian National trains, and a meat mixture flavored with herbs and sautéed. Estelle Katz of Ville St. Laurent remembers acquiring her

Tourtière à l'Alsace

Monique Gopel, Châteauguay

Early settlers who came to Quebec from Alsace were responsible for the first local tourtières, tortes, or tarts, writes Monique Gopel, who acquired this recipe from her late father, a pastry chef in Colmar, Alsace, France.

The meat mixture is marinated, placed raw in the puff pastry crust and flavored with the addition of chicken livers. One taster was reminded of a lean, light pate, another called it "the goose of tourtières."

- 250 g ground veal (½ pound)
- 250 g ground pork (½ pound)
- 250 g ground beef (½ pound)
- 185 ml Sylvaner Alsatian or Riesling wine
- 2 dry shallots or 3 medium onions
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil (30 mL)
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour (30 mL)
- Salt, pepper
- Fresh, chopped parsley
- 3 chicken livers (optional)
- 2 pounds puff pastry (1 kg)*
- 1 egg yolk

The day before baking the tourtière, marinate the veal, pork and beef in the wine covered in the refrigerator.

When ready to make the tourtière heat 2 tablespoons oil in large, heavy frying pan. Chop shallots or onions finely and sauté in hot oil until soft and glazed. Add eggs, flour, salt, pepper and parsley, and mix well.

Roll out one pound (500 g) of the pastry (*Gopel buys it at Kosher Quality Bakery, 5855 Victoria Ave., Montreal) into a circle measuring about 25 cm (10 inches).

Arrange in black, metal, 25-cm

(10-inch) pie plate. Spread evenly with meat mixture. Slice chicken livers and arrange evenly over meat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Roll out remaining one pound (500 g) pastry in a circle measuring about 25 cm (10 inches). Arrange on top of meat. Wet edges with water and fold outer edge under, pressing it to lower pastry.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F (230 degrees C). Mix egg yolk with one tablespoon water and a pinch of salt and brush all over pie. Decorate crust with leftover dough, as desired, and make air vents with a fork so steam can escape during baking.

Bake tourtière in preheated oven for 20 minutes, then lower heat to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C) and bake 25 minutes more. Serve hot tourtière with a green salad, and a celery root salad, and Sylvaner Alsatian or Riesling wine.

Pork Tourtière

Kathleen Fleet Pineaou
Quebec City

This recipe was bequeathed to Pineaou, who came from the Lower St. Lawrence region, some 40 years ago. The gift of an aunt who was considered a Cordon Bleu cook, its flavoring has been altered somewhat to suit her family.

1¼ pounds ground pork (825 g)

- ½ in ¼ cup cold water (125 to 175 mL)
- ½ cup finely chopped onions (125 mL)
- ¼ cup finely chopped celery (50 mL)
- 1 teaspoon pepper (5 mL)
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ teaspoon rosemary (2 mL)
- ½ teaspoon savory (1 mL)
- ½ teaspoon grated nutmeg (1 mL)

Pinch cinnamon
¼ cup rolled oats
Pastry for 3-crust pie (23 cm)

In a large, heavy fryer, pork and cold water. When reaches a boil, add onion, pepper, bay leaf, savory, nutmeg and cinnamon over medium heat for half-hour through cooking salt.

Preheat oven to 425 (220 degrees C). Add the meat mixture and onion for another couple of minutes. Add ½ cup (125 mL) pie pan add meat mixture, and pastry.

Cut air vents in top crust as desired. Bake in oven for 15 minutes. Then heat to 400 degrees F (200 C) and bake another 25 until done.

Beef and Pork To

Margo Peterson, Pointe

Submitted by a former teacher who has emigrated more than 30 years, this recipe came a favorite with children, some of whom read into French-speaking. "They are now making it at Christmas instead of French tourtière," it writes.

- 3 onions, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ cup chopped onion (125 mL)
- 2 carrots, pared, 2 pounds minced (kg)
- ½ pound minced (250 g)
- 1 cup fresh bread (250 mL)

Expert tips on making memor

Home economist Labelle offers her tip on turning out a tourtière to remember.

• Meat with 20 to 25 per cent fat gives the best texture although not

possibility of a dry pie since from meat usually loses natural juices as it thaws. Extra seasonings can disguise the loss of meat flavor.

• Cool the meat mixture completely

than the inner part. You test the rim with a knife and collar.

• A thick rim to the longer to cook, so with

